



The month of September is National Preparedness Month.

Being reactive to catastrophes and hardships is only one way of dealing with difficulties. The safety of those in our families and community cannot afford that convenience and must not be ignored.

Flooding in South Dakota has taken a toll on a number of citizens throughout South Dakota this past summer. When a disaster occurs, feelings of frustration, loss of control and discouragement over the amount of work that needs to be done in order to restore essential roads, buildings, and even entire farms can seem insurmountable. But, even disasters have a silver lining. It brings the best out of communities by showing the true strength of our collective efforts. Neighbors work side-by-side despite differences they might have had in the past to provide relief for those in need, a disaster becomes every citizen's responsibility.

With a long winter looming in South Dakota, chances are we have even more difficult weather to come. Residents in every region need to take steps to ensure the safety of the entire community in the event of a disaster. Burdens and responsibilities of a disaster can be spread throughout the community and the government, and in dire situations any change comes as a relief. When

our state encountered a series of extraordinary weather, I worked together with the South Dakotan delegation to quickly and efficiently to declare counties as disaster areas, allowing federal recovery aid to cut through lengthily deliberation.

We need proactive approaches to keeping our communities prepared for natural, man made, and technological disasters. I urge you to take action during National Preparedness Month. Subscribing to alert services, having emergency supplies, and creating a family emergency plan all take little time; the ease-of-mind resulting is immeasurable. Many members of your community have already donated their time with training and exercises in response programs offered at the National Guard, Red Cross, the South Dakota Citizen Corps, and the Civil Air Patrol. State government has dedicated funds to the South Dakota Department of Public Safety, as well as hundreds who volunteer with police, medical and fire services.

Stephanie's Work:

I held nine community meetings since April to discuss how we can take a proactive approach to flooding in our state and improve response. I met with local, state and federal officials, including Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate and Risk Management Agency Administrator William Murphy to review the flooding damage and discuss potential sources of flood relief resources. With diligence, we were able to acquire \$1.5 million in quick release emergency funds from the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration to repair federal-aid roads damaged by the floods this year in order to keep the momentum of disaster response to areas in need. Last fall I also hosted USDA secretary Tom Vilsack to show him flood damage in northeastern South Dakota, an area that experiences the threat of floods yearly and urged him to begin implementation of relief programs found in the 2008 Farm Bill. Last year in December I was proud to announce the USDA began implementing the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments programs (SURE), designed to provide financial assistance for crop production and or quality losses due to a natural disaster.

Resources:

To learn more about National Emergency Preparedness Month and what you can do visit <http://www.ready.gov/>

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns on these issues or others of interest to you by visiting my website: hersethsandlin.house.gov or by calling toll free: 866.371.8747.

